

REMARKS

Claim 7 is amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and also to overcome the rejections based on Japanese 9-99795. Claims 8 and 9 are cancelled without prejudice. Claim 7 remains, with no claim previously allowed.

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected as unpatentable over JP '795. This rejection is traversed, as possibly applied to amended Claim 7. That claim defines an airbag comprising an upper bag portion and a lower bag portion, these bag portions being joined together to form the airbag. The lower bag portion has a lower rear surface joined with a left side portion of the airbag, by a left joining line including a plurality of arc shaped portions (15,17,16) which have different radii and join continuously with each other. Also, a right end of the lower rear surface is joined with a right side portion by a right joining line including a plurality of arc shape portions having different radii and joining continuously with each other.

In other words, only the lower rear surface (4c) of the lower bag portion is joined with the left and right side portions (4b,4b) by the respective left and right joining lines including the plurality of arc shaped portions.

JP '795 does not teach the lower rear surface or face portion extended more than the upper rear surface or face portion, as the Examiner recognizes (page 3, lines 6 and 7 of last Office action). The structural limitations now recited in Claim 7, in combination with other structural and functional elements in that claim, produce that result, so that the lower rear surface (4c) of the airbag approaches the abdomen of the occupant when the airbag deploys. The benefits of the claimed arrangement are discussed in the paragraph bridging pages 4 and 5 of the present specification.

The rejection asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to modify JP '795 to include the rear surface of the lower part of the airbag extending further than the

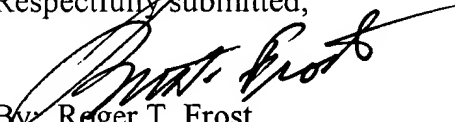
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upper part of the bag. However, that modification is not suggested by, and does not follow from, the teachings of the reference. Furthermore, nothing in that reference is seen to suggest the desirability or beneficial results in airbag according to the present invention, as pointed out in the present application. These teachings come only from the present applicant, not from JP '795. Accordingly, Claim 7 defines patentable subject matter over that reference.

The rejection of Claims 8 and 9 is moot, as those claims have been cancelled.

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office action identified above. This application now should be in condition for allowance and the applicant solicits a notice to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,


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